

ADVENT 2020: A NEW NATIVITY FOR FIRST CHURCH

The idea for an outdoor Nativity scene was born of our desire as a congregation to send a message of hope into the community in a year when so many are feeling the pangs of hopelessness. We want to lift the spirits of our neighbors and come together in the joy of the Advent season.

The design for the Nativity figures was inspired by the art of Origami. The original figures were made of cardstock and just 10 inches high. Local artisan, Bob Tomaska, working with experts in Chicago and the western suburbs, enlarged the blueprints for the figures to nearly 4 feet high. Using a weatherproof, lightweight metal composite and specialized hardware, Bob then incorporated precise folds and cuts to give the figures their abstract appearance. His nonrepresentational artistry invites us to “see” these figures through a lens of our own emotions and feeling.

In contrast, the design and the materials of the stable are rustic. This more realistic representation invites the viewer to step into the time and place of the birth of Jesus. The walls of the stable are constructed of donated recycled pallets that were skillfully disassembled by members of our congregation.

The juxtaposition of these two elements encourages the viewer to closely consider the figures and their purpose in the scene.

We have also included signage highlighting several key scriptures from Matthew and Luke depicting the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.



*Our goal was to create a Nativity
that would draw the passerby in for a closer look
and remind the viewer of God's gift of hope
delivered in the birth of Jesus Christ.*

The creation of the First Church Nativity scene was very much a community effort. We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following companies and individuals:

- Bob Tomaska of Elmhurst for your vision and dedication to this project
- Floor & Décor of Lombard for the donation of the pallets
- Sports Awards of Chicago for the use of their facility, machinery, and expertise
- Anonymous local vendor for his expertise and access to Alpollic materials
- Numerous church members and staff for their inspiration, dedication, and labor in helping to make this Nativity project a reality.



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First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst
for its assistance in funding the project.*

Background written by Kathy Hansen.